



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

February 15, 2005

The Honorable Board of Directors
Los Angeles County
Regional Park and Open Space District
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Directors:

**APPROVE THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY'S REQUEST TO
AMEND THE INITIAL PROJECT LIST PURSUANT TO
SECTION (3), SUBSECTION (d) OF THE SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
PROPOSITION OF 1996, ALLOCATE THIRD SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT
SPECIFIED EXCESS FUNDS AND AUTHORIZE AWARD
AND ADMINISTRATION OF AN EXCESS FUNDS GRANT
(THIRD DISTRICT - 3 - VOTE MATTER)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Find that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
2. Approve the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's (Conservancy) request to amend its initial project list, approved by your Board on January 21, 1997 and previously amended on August 4, 1998, May 11, 1999, December 18, 2001, December 17, 2002, May 13, 2003, April 27, 2004 and November 3, 2004, to add a new acquisition project, the Soka University property in the Santa Monica Mountains.
3. Allocate Third Supervisorial District Specified Excess Funds in the amount of \$575,000 to the Conservancy for the Soka University property acquisition project.

4. Authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation, in his capacity as Director of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District, to award a grant to the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority (MRCA) for the above acquisition when applicable conditions have been met and to administer the grant as of the date of this action and pursuant to procedures in the Procedural Guide for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The Conservancy is requesting your Board's approval to add the proposed acquisition of Soka University property in western Los Angeles County to its initial project list so that the Conservancy can use funds allocated pursuant to the Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition of 1996 (1996 Proposition) for the acquisition. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area General Plan identifies the Soka University complex as the eventual location for the National Recreation Area visitor's center. The proposed acquisition will preserve the area as open space and will protect outstanding representative plant communities, provide foraging and nesting habitat and is a highly important wildlife movement corridor. The site is also a significant scenic resource in the region.

Additionally, approval of the recommended actions will allocate \$575,000 in Specified Excess Funds to the Conservancy for the Soka University property acquisition. The entire project cost of \$35,000,000 includes \$1,500,000 of the funds advanced to the Conservancy pursuant to the 1996 Proposition and \$32,925,000 from private, municipal and state sources. The project will be administered by the MRCA on behalf of the Conservancy as authorized in the Conservancy's Procedural Guide adopted by your Board on June 17, 1997.

The proposed project consists of the acquisition of approximately 588 acres bounded by Malibu Creek State Park and Las Virgenes Road to the west; Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area open space and privately-owned land to the south; Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority-owned Las Virgenes View Park and privately-owned land to the north; and privately owned land to the east. Mulholland Highway follows the northwestern boundary of the property and then turns and bisects the property. A map of the project area is included as Attachment A.

It is also recommended that the Director of Parks and Recreation be authorized to award the grant to the MRCA, when applicable conditions have been met, such as grantee qualifications and consistency between the projects and requirements of the 1996 Proposition, and to administer the grant under procedures previously approved by your Board.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed actions further the Board approved County Strategic Plan Goal No. 1 (Service Excellence), Goal No. 4 (Fiscal Responsibility), Goal No. 5 (Children and Family Well-being), and Goal No. 6 (Community Services) by funding the acquisition of additional protected open space land in the Santa Monica Mountains.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Sufficient appropriation for the grant in the amount of \$575,000 is budgeted in the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District Excess Funds Project Fund, HD6. Funds for the grant are available from the Third Supervisorial District's portion of the Regional Park and Open Space District allocations of Excess Funds for Fiscal Year 2004-05.

Additionally, project funding from the District, in an estimated amount of \$1,500,000, will be funded from the \$22,750,000 allocated to the Conservancy under Section (3), Subsection (d) of the 1996 Proposition and already advanced to the Conservancy. The cost of the entire project, including the \$2,075,000 in District funds, is \$35,000,000.

These actions will allow acquisition by the MRCA, on behalf of the Conservancy, and will have no impact on the County's General Fund.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The 1996 Proposition requires that funds provided to the Conservancy be expended "solely for projects approved by the Board, pursuant to such criteria as the Board may, in its discretion, adopt," provided that those projects are identified in the Conservancy's annual work program transmitted to the Governor and State Legislature and as may be amended from time to time, after a noticed public hearing.

The 1996 Proposition further provides that your Board may disapprove a project within the boundaries of a city only upon a finding that the acquisition or improvement may impact access to or use of a site identified or proposed for present or future sanitary landfill purposes. In addition, your Board previously has adopted procedural requirements requiring a review of proposed Conservancy projects relative to their impact on existing or proposed highways, and their consistency with General or Area Plans.

The proposed acquisition project meets the procedural requirements of the 1996 Proposition and has been reviewed in accordance with the Conservancy's revised Procedural Guide, adopted by your Board on June 17, 1997.

The Department of Public Works has found that the project would not negatively impact current or potential future County sanitary landfill sites (Attachment B).

The Department of Public Works has also found that planned County roads or highways might affect Las Virgenes Road. If it becomes necessary to widen Las Virgenes Road to Mayor Highway standards in the future, after Soka University property becomes parkland, any future acquisition of right-of-way to accommodate road widening will be subject to the Federal Parklands Act. This would significantly increase the cost and complexity of the right-of-way acquisition process since any acquired parkland property would need to be replaced elsewhere (Attachment C).

The County Counsel's Office and the Department of Regional Planning have determined that there are no inconsistencies or lack of conformity between the unincorporated portion of the proposal and the applicable County planning documents (Attachments D and E).

The 1996 Proposition provides for an annual determination of the availability of excess funds and for allocation of such funds for capital projects in four categories. On June 8, 2004, your Board identified excess funds for capital projects in Fiscal Year 2004-05. Any funds allocated by your Board, but not encumbered by award of a grant contract in the same fiscal year, shall be available for allocation by your Board in the following fiscal year.

The 1996 Proposition requires that agencies to which funds were allocated under the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996 encumber all such funds prior to receiving grants of Excess Funds. The Conservancy has met this requirement. The Board may establish additional conditions on grants of Excess Funds. Your Board approved a Procedural Guide on June 17, 1997, to govern the administration of Regional Park and Open Space District grants for Conservancy projects. This Procedural Guide would appropriately govern the administration of the recommended additional grant as well. The Director of Parks and Recreation would be authorized to award a grant when all applicable conditions under the procedural guide have been met.

County Counsel has reviewed these actions as to form.

The Honorable Board of Directors
February 15, 2005
Page 5

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

Your Board's approval of these recommendations will allow the Conservancy to acquire the Soka University property in the Santa Monica Mountains. It will have no impact on any other District-funded project.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The allocation of funds for the proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) according to Section 15325 (f) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Class 25 of the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines adopted by your Board on November 17, 1987, because the project provides for transfer of ownership of interest in land to preserve open space.

Projects funded through the District are also required to undergo the applicable CEQA review by the MRCA.

CONCLUSION

Please instruct the Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board to return one conformed copy of this action to the Chief Administrative Office, Capital Projects Division, and to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Respectfully submitted,



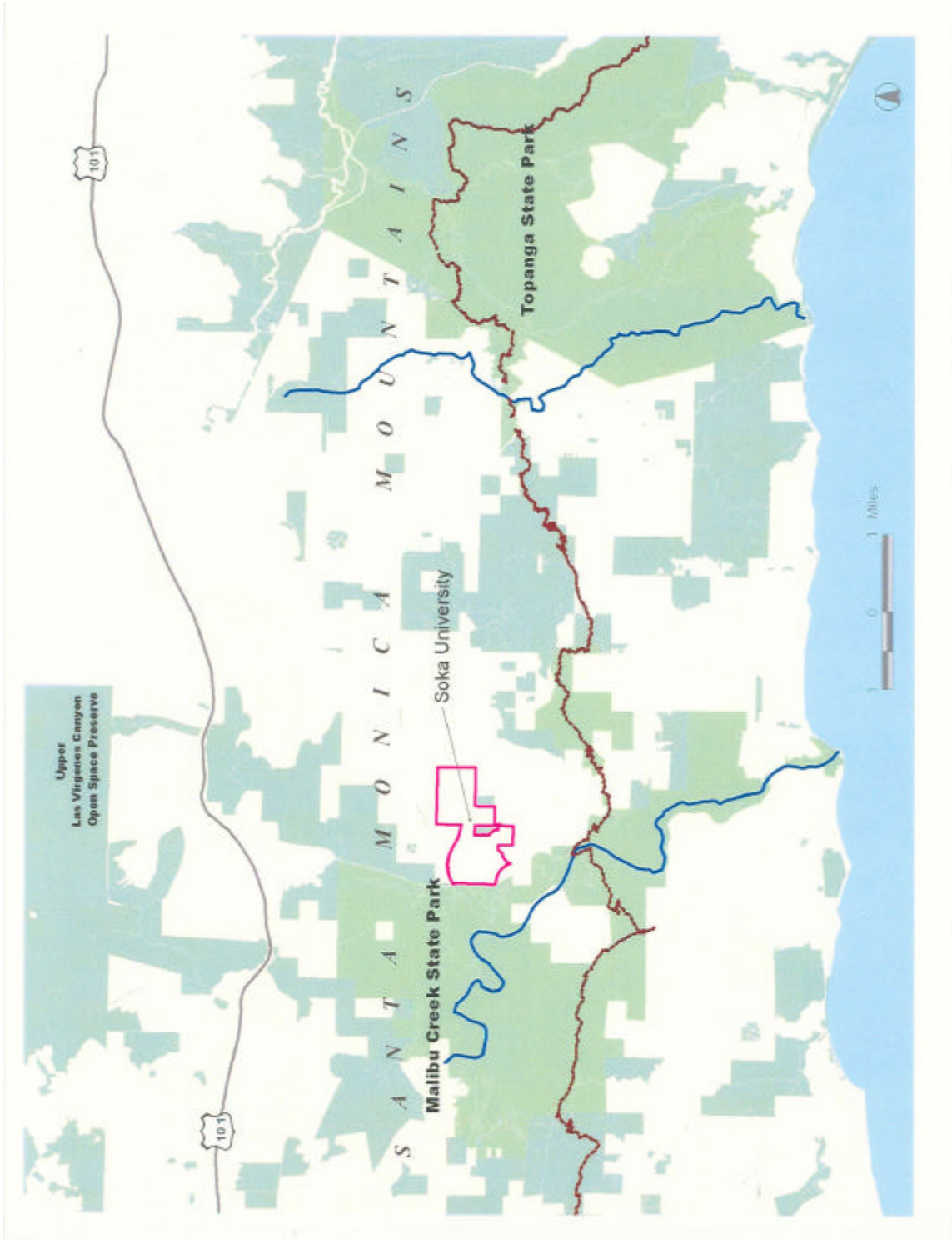
Russ Guiney
Director, Parks and Recreation

Attachments (5)

- c: Chief Administrative Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors (22)
County Counsel



Soka University
The Center of the Santa Monica Mountains





COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
Telephone: (626) 458-5100
www.ladpw.org

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
P.O. BOX 1460
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460

IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE EP-2

January 13, 2005

TO: Ilona Volkmann
Interim Administrator of Regional Park and Open Space District

Attention Perlita Flores

FROM: Donald L. Wolfe 
Acting Director of Public Works

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY'S REQUEST
FOR A NEW ACQUISITION PROJECT
SOKA UNIVERSITY PROPERTY**

Pursuant to your correspondence of December 13, 2004, we have reviewed the proposed property acquisition by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Our review was limited to the impact of the proposed acquisition on the solid waste management system in the County of Los Angeles. Based on the information provided, we have found that the proposed acquisition of the Soka University property will not negatively impact the solid waste management system.

If you have any questions, please contact me or you may contact Shari Afshari, Assistant Deputy Director, Environmental Programs Division, at (626) 458-3500, Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

SA:my
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cc: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky (Ginny Kruger)



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
P.O. BOX 1460
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460

January 31, 2005

IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE: LD-4

TO: Russ Guiney
Director of Parks and Recreation

Attention Ilona Volkmann
Regional Park and Open Space District

FROM: Donald L. Wolfe 
Acting Director of Public Works

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY'S SOKA UNIVERSITY PROPERTY ACQUISITION

As requested in your recent memorandum, we reviewed the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's proposed Soka University property project and have the following comments:

Las Virgenes Road is currently designated as a Major Highway in the County of Los Angeles Highway Plan. A Major Highway requires 100 feet of right of way (50 feet from the centerline on each side). The existing right of way for Las Virgenes Road fronting Soka University is generally 20 feet from the centerline. If it becomes necessary to widen Las Virgenes Road to Major Highway standards in the future, up to 30 feet of additional right of way along the westerly property line will be needed. After the Soka University property becomes parkland, any future acquisition of right of way to accommodate road widening will be subject to the Federal Parklands Act. This would significantly increase the cost and complexity of the right-of-way acquisition process since any acquired parkland property will need to be replaced elsewhere.

If you have any questions regarding our comments, please have your staff contact Hubert Seto of our Land Development Division at (626) 458-4349.

HS:jmw
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cc: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky (Maria Chong-Castillo, Ginny Kruger)



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL

648 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-2713

RAYMOND G. FORTNER, JR.
County Counsel

January 21, 2005

TELEPHONE
(213) 974-1857
FACSIMILE
(213) 617-7182
TDD
(213) 633-0901

TO: ILONA VOLKMAN
Interim Administrator
Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District

FROM: PETER J. GUTIERREZ
Senior Deputy County Counsel
Public Works Division

RE: **Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's Request for A New Acquisition Project**

This memorandum is in response to your December 13, 2004 correspondence concerning the proposed acquisition of the SOKA University property by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Conservancy's request that the Regional Parks and Open Space District amend its Initial Work Program to add the SOKA acquisition. You have requested that this office provide a written determination concerning whether the proposed project is consistent with the applicable General Plan or Local Area Plan.

As you are aware, our determination as to General Plan consistency is based on information contained in the Department of Regional Planning's ("Planning") response to your request for a finding of General Plan consistency. Based on information we received from Planning and discussion with Planning staff, we have determined that there are no inconsistencies or lack of conformity between the proposal and the applicable County planning document.

PJG:di

c: Ginny Kruger, Deputy
Third Supervisorial District

Sorin H. Alexanian, Section Head
Land Development Coordinating Center
Department of Regional Planning



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



James E. Hartl, AICP
Director of Planning

Date: January 11, 2005

To: Ilona Volkmann, Interim Administrator
Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District

From: Sorin H. Alexanian
Section Head
Land Development Coordinating Center

**REGIONAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT REVIEW, SECTION 65402:
Acquisition of Soka University property for Public Park/Open Space Purposes.**

Pursuant to Section 65402 of the Government Code, my staff has reviewed your request for our comment relative to the above referenced action. Since the proposed use of the property would be for public park or open space uses, it would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the adopted Malibu Local Coastal Plan. One of the principal goals of the Local Coastal Plan is to encourage interagency cooperation in the development, maintenance and operation of recreational uses. This is facilitated by the Local Coastal Plan objective which stresses the acquisition of private lands for multiple recreational uses.

Subsequent development of the subject property will require Regional Planning Department and Coastal Commission Review. Should you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Maurice Garrick of my staff at (213) 974-6470.

SHA:MG:26

c: Peter Gutierrez